

**LAKE TRAVIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
86TH Regular Session (2019)**

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Lake Travis ISD supports legislation that seeks to reform public school funding in adequate and equitable ways and that reduces the state's over-reliance on local property taxes. In particular, LTISD supports the following funding measures:

Incorporate appraisal/revenue caps only when an adequate state funding source is identified to cover the shortfall.

- Currently, the state contributes 40% of school funding and the remaining 60% of funding is generated through local property taxes. While LTISD supports a reduction in the state's reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools, the current proposed appraisal/revenue caps will leave a substantial shortfall in the state's budget (\$2.5-\$3.0 billion) without identifying how the state will adequately compensate for the reduction in funds.

Fully fund the New Instructional Facilities Allotment (NIFA).

- Under current law, districts are eligible for a \$1,000 allotment per ADA on all new instructional facilities for the first two years; however, the current allocation for NIFA funding only covers a small percentage of the qualified district applications. In the prior biennium, NIFA funding only covered approximately 25% of the costs, forcing districts to cover the remaining 75% of the costs out of their general funds.

Continue to use the state's certified prior year property values to adequately account for school funding.

- There is not enough time or resources available to adequately account for current year values. Even after the current year tax levy is certified, monthly adjustments continue throughout the year. Use of prior year values provides districts the ability to accurately budget.

Update the Cost of Education Index (CEI).

- CEI is the mechanism that Texas uses to adjust foundation program calculations to compensate for variations in resource costs and costs of education beyond the control of school districts. The CEI has not been updated since 1989-1990. LTISD's current CEI is 1.08. If LTISD was to adjust its CEI up to the average of 1.10, the increase in educational funding would be approximately \$1.2 million annually.

Adequately fund the Transportation Allotment for all districts.

- The Transportation Allotment statute was enacted in 1984, prior to the enactment of the recapture statute in 1995. As a result, the Texas Education Agency interprets the statute,

TEC Section 42.155, as not permitting payment of the transportation allotment to Chapter 41 districts, such as LTISD.

- LTISD's Transportation Department is responsible for transporting over 5,300 students to and from school each day. LTISD currently allocates approximately \$4.0 million for public transportation. The Transportation Allotment would cover approximately \$1.0 million of this cost.

Increase funding for special education services.

- The State's weighted student model for special education funding has existed in its current form since 1995, yet the landscape and cost of educating students with disabilities has changed. Updated and increased funding sufficient to address the rising number of students being served, the increasing costs, and the requirements of the corrective action plan is necessary for districts to continue to appropriately serve students.

SAFETY AND SECURITY / MENTAL HEALTH

Lake Travis ISD supports legislation that addresses the increasing demand for safety, security and mental health support, while opposing unfunded mandates. In particular, LTISD supports the following measures:

- Additional and ongoing state funding and resources for districts to use in developing measures that will increase safety, security, and mental health services on their campuses.
- Flexibility for districts to make local decisions about safety, security, and mental health measures/efforts that best address their specific needs.

LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Lake Travis ISD supports legislation that provides flexibility to local school boards to operate school districts as expected by local communities. In particular, LTISD supports the following:

Funding public schools and opposing any initiative that would divert public tax dollars from public schools to private schools or other schools exempt from state and federal accountability requirements and laws.

- Public tax dollars should be invested in meeting the educational needs of all Texas students rather than in vouchers, education savings accounts, tuition/education tax credits, taxpayer savings grants, scholarships or similar programs.

Support the current system of flexible uniform election dates for bond and TREs and oppose changes to elections that do not apply to all levels of government.